



Veteran Town Hall

Hosted by Director Al Montoya

“COVID-19 Vaccine”

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Agenda

Opening Remarks

Director Al Montoya

Overview of state and VA Connecticut COVID-19 trends

Dr. Mike Kozal, Chief of Staff

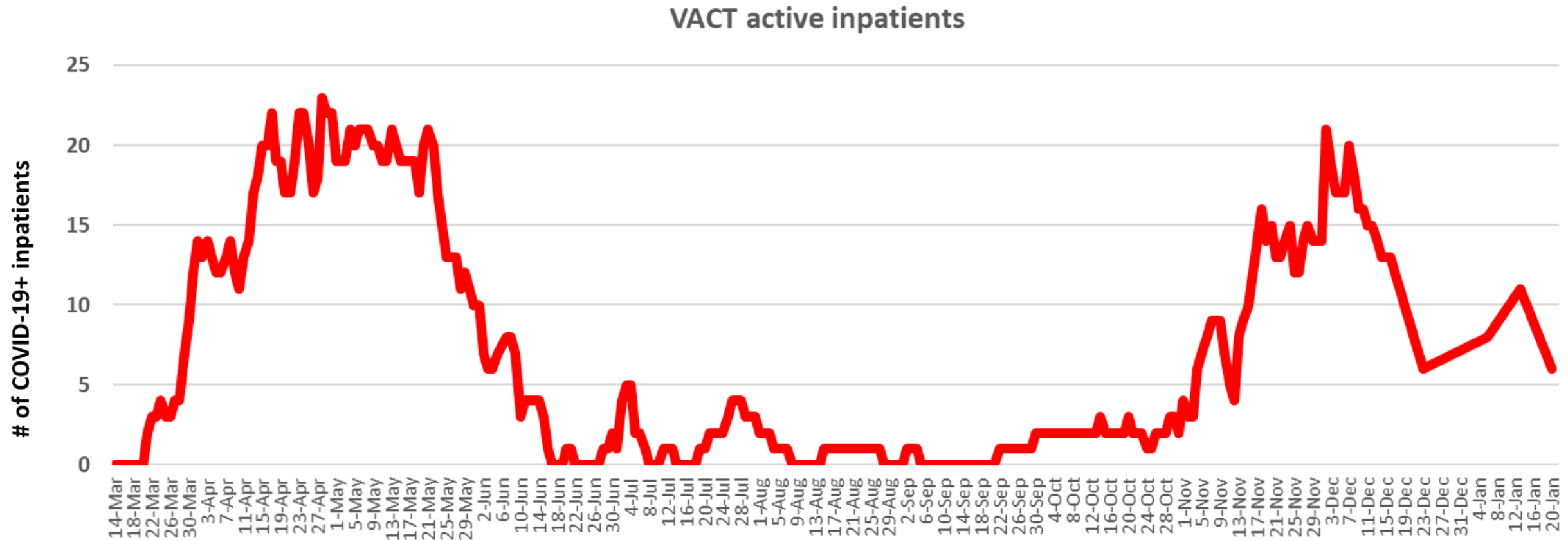
COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Distribution

Meghan Wilkosz, PharmD, Associate Service Chief, Pharmacy Operations

Vaccination Scheduling

Questions

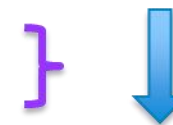
VA Connecticut Inpatient Trends 3/14/20-1/20/21



VA National



Date	Active Cases
10/9	3,740
10/22	4,995
10/30	5,813
11/6	7,443
11/13	9,571
11/18	11,880
11/24	13,214
12/1	15,765
12/9	16,239
12/11	17,757
12/23	12,188
1/6	14,886
1/13	18,620
1/20	15,262



VA Connecticut – January 20, 2021

Total unique patients tested: 11,279*

- Negative (unique patients): 10,343
- Positive (unique patients): 936

Current inpatients:

- 1 PUI
- 6 Positive

8.3% (936+/11,279)
positivity rate of all testing

Date range	% Positivity Rate
1/14 – 1/20	18.14%
1/7 – 1/13	13.11%
12/31 – 1/6	19.02%
12/24 – 12/30	25.78%
12/17 – 12/23	19.27%
12/10 – 12/16	17.4%
12/3 – 12/9	19.34%
11/26 – 12/2	19.38%
11/19 – 11/25	11.8%
11/12 - 11/18	14.07%
11/5 - 11/11	12.5%
10/29 - 11/4	7.84%

Connecticut COVID-19 Summary

Summary for the most recent day of reporting. Includes confirmed plus probable cases; probable cases include persons with positive antigen results

Measure	Total	ChangeDirection	Change
COVID-19 Cases (confirmed and probable)	232,219	+	2,094
COVID-19 Tests Reported (molecular and antigen)	5,328,928	+	37,033
Daily Test Positivity*			5.65%
Patients Currently Hospitalized with COVID-19	1,141 inpatients → 1,141	+	27
COVID-19-Associated Deaths	6,682	+	12

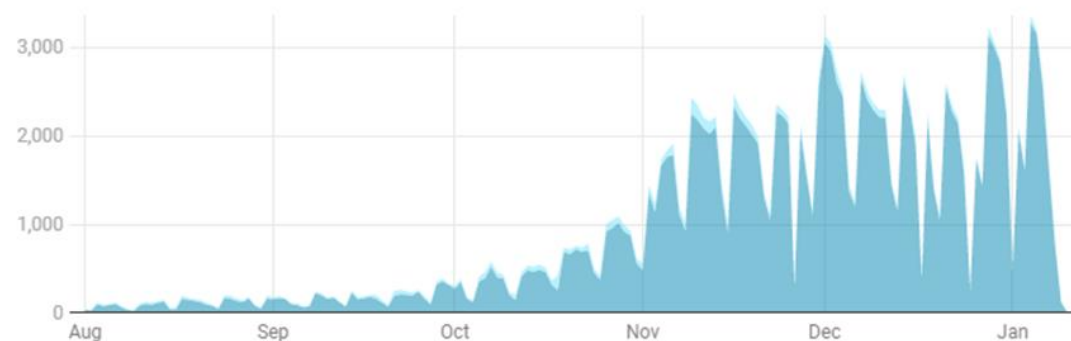
Daily test positivity is the number of new positive molecular and antigen cases divided by the number of new molecular and antigen tests reported in the past 24 hours.

Table: Ver 12.1.2020 • Source: [CT Department of Public Health](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Number of Confirmed and Probable COVID-19 Cases by Date

Test results may be reported several days after the result. Data are incomplete for the most recent days. Data from previous dates are routinely updated.

Confirmed Probable



Date of Specimen Collection (confirmed) or Symptom Onset (probable)

Chart: Ver 12.1.2020 • Source: [CT Department of Public Health](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Tracker>



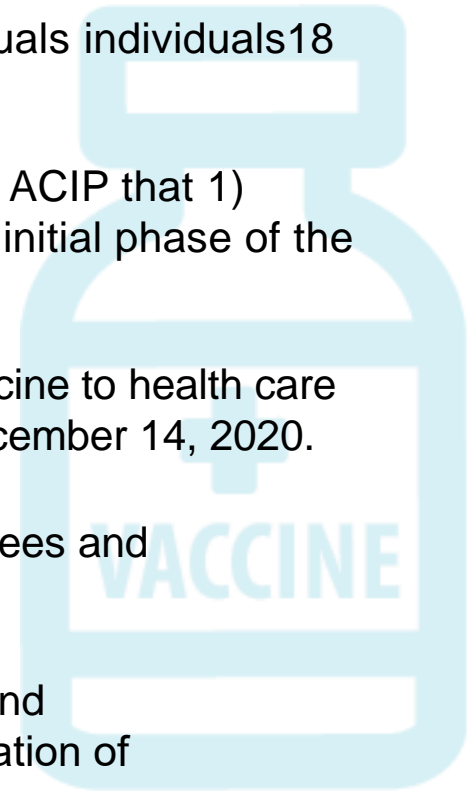
2020-2021 Early Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccine Veteran Town Hall

Meghan F. Wilkosz, PharmD
Associate Service Chief, Pharmacy Operations

January 25, 2021

Overview

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the first two COVID-19 vaccines, manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech, Inc., and Moderna under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) in December 2020.
- On December 13, 2020, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine in individuals 16 years of age and older under the EUA.
- On December 19, 2020, ACIP recommended use of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine in individuals 18 years of age and older under an EUA.
- ACIP recommends that when a COVID-19 vaccine is authorized by FDA and recommended by ACIP that 1) health care personnel and 2) residents of long-term care facilities be offered vaccination in the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program.
- There will be limited vaccine available initially until production increases. VA began offering vaccine to health care personnel (HCP) and a limited number of Veterans residing in VA's long-term care facilities on December 14, 2020.
- As more vaccine becomes available, VA's ultimate goal is to offer COVID-19 vaccine to all employees and Veterans who receive care at VA, who want it.
- Even after you get a COVID-19 vaccine, face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), and physical distancing will still be required at our facility until more is known about the vaccine's duration of protection.



Initial Sites Receiving Vaccine

- VA distributed the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine at [52 VA medical facilities](#).
 - VA selected the initial Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine sites because they had the capacity to meet specific storage requirements, including maintaining vaccine supply at ultracold storage (-20 °C or -70 °C) and using large quantities of vaccines within a short timeframe.
- VA distributed the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine at [113 VA medical facilities](#).
 - VA selected these sites to distribute the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine to maximize ethical and equitable distribution of vaccine across VHA.
- VA Connecticut is administering both the Pfizer (West Haven) and Moderna (Newington) vaccines.

Effectiveness and Safety

- Both vaccines have proven safe and highly effective in clinical trials.
 - The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine was 95% effective in preventing confirmed COVID-19 illness.
 - The Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine was 94% effective in preventing confirmed COVID-19 illness.
- Both vaccines use mRNA technology.
 - mRNA vaccines work by using genetic material from the COVID-19 virus to make proteins that the body's immune system will recognize and make antibodies against.
 - mRNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell and does not affect or interact with an individual's DNA.
 - You cannot get COVID-19 illness from the vaccine.
- VA will work with the FDA and the CDC to monitor the vaccines' use and safety.

Potential Side Effects: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

➡ The most common side effects of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine are:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pain (myalgia)
- Joint pain (arthralgia)
- Chills
- Injection site pain
- Redness at the injection site
- Fever

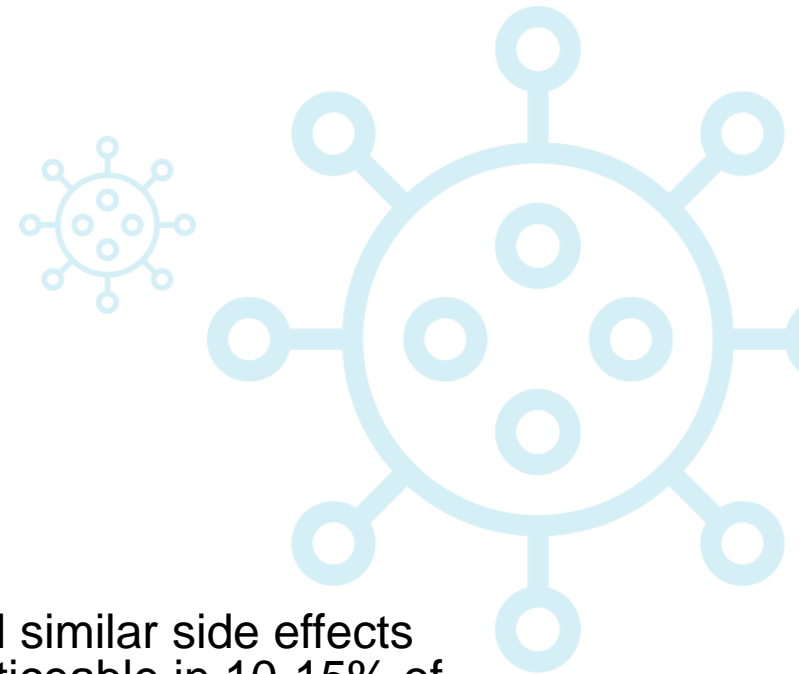
➡ For most people, the side effects lasted no more than 48 hours.

➡ Serious adverse events were rare and not related to the vaccine.

➡ All participants in clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines, experienced similar side effects during the trial phase. These are similar to other vaccines and were noticeable in 10-15% of those vaccinated.

➡ These side effects are a sign that your immune system is working to build protection against the virus.

➡ It is important to complete the two-dose series, even if there are side effects, in order to optimize protection.



Potential Side Effects: Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine

➤ The most common side effects of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine are:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pain (myalgia) & joint pain (arthralgia)
- Chills
- Nausea and vomiting
- Swelling/tenderness in the armpit
- Injection site pain and redness at the injection site

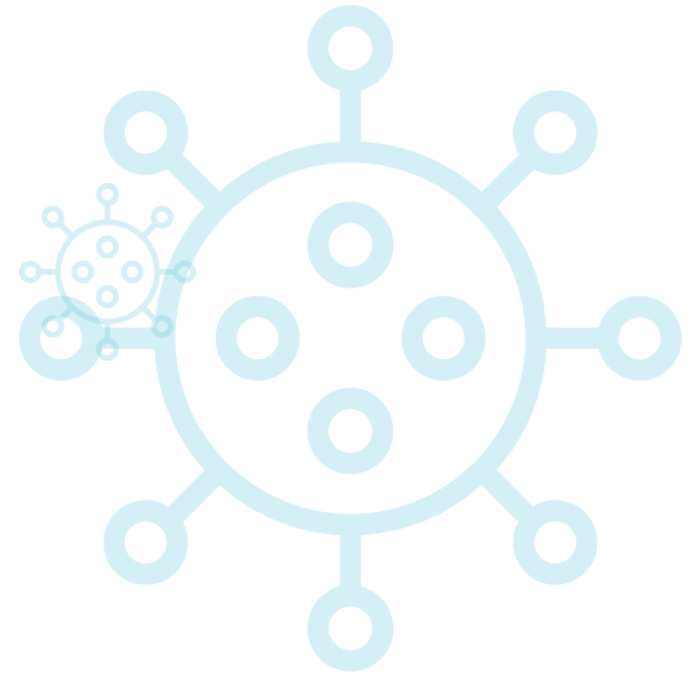
➤ For most people, the side effects lasted no more than 72 hours.

➤ Serious adverse events were rare and not related to the vaccine.

➤ All participants in clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines, experienced similar side effects during the trial phase. These are similar to other vaccines and were noticeable in 10-15% of those vaccinated.

➤ These side effects are a sign that your immune system is working to build protection against the virus.

➤ It is important to complete the two-dose series, even if there are side effects, in order to optimize protection.



Who Will Be Vaccinated First

- During this period of limited vaccine supply, if your care team determines that you are eligible to receive the vaccine, **you will be contacted directly** by phone to determine your interest and to schedule an appointment.
 - *This is the VA Connecticut Healthcare System we are sorry we missed you today. We are calling to provide additional information about the COVID vaccine. We will call you back. Due to high call volumes and increased wait times, we ask that you please not call us back.*
 - Email and mail notifications may also be sent when vaccine supply increases.
- You don't need to pre-register or have a prescription to receive the vaccine. You can change your mind at any time about receiving the vaccine.
 - **We ask that you please call to cancel your appointment so we can offer the vaccine to another patient.**
- Vaccine is currently available at the main campuses only (West Haven and Newington).
 - We eventually hope to make it available at the community clinics. Timeline to be determine based upon supply.



Vaccine Distribution

- As of the week of Jan. 18, we are vaccinating:
 - Veterans ages 75 and up
 - Homeless Veterans
 - Dialysis patients
 - Solid Organ transplant patients or those listed for transplant
 - Chemotherapy patients – receiving chemo in clinic or hospital setting
 - Community Living Center residents
 - Veterans in congregate housing

- Veterans vaccinated to date (first dose as of Jan. 20, 2021):
 - West Haven campus: 2919
 - Newington campus: 1517



COVID Vaccine Updated Matrix

VA Connecticut Veterans by the numbers:

Group B-1a:

- Chemo - 540
 - Transplant – 134
 - CLC – 17
 - Dialysis – 31
 - Homeless – 1660
 - Age 85 and older - 5439
 - Age 75 - 84 = 8,342
- = 16,163 Veterans

Group C-1a:

- Age 65 -74 = 11,972 Veterans

Group C-1b:

- Younger than 65 with high-risk conditions (defined by CDC)
- = 6,914 Veterans

Group C-1c:

- Veterans younger than 65 = 8,441 Veterans

Grand Total (combined all lists) : **43,490 Veterans**

Interim Risk Stratification Table Version 1.1

CDC-VA	Staff	Veterans		Comments
A- 1a	CLC/SCID unit staff	Veterans residing in VA CLC/SCID		<p>Staff members not listed, including those who travel between units, should be offered COVID-19 vaccine with the group or unit most resembling their risk profile</p> <p>For COVID-19 vaccines where rate of anticipated systemic side effects is high according to the applicable EUA fact sheet and/or CDC guidance, it is recommended that COVID-19 vaccination is staggered, so that the number of personnel in each unit receiving vaccine at a given time is low. This will limit absences related to response to the COVID-19 vaccine. Under this scenario, offering COVID-19 vaccine to any HCP would be appropriate, rather than offering sequentially by risk.</p> <p>* this should comprise the smallest number of staff needed to continue operations, rather than all persons who hold a particular job or role, with intent of keeping the health care system functioning to care for Veterans and keep staff safe.</p>
A- 1b	Emergency Department, EMT			
A- 1c	COVID-19 ICU staff			
A- 1d	COVID-19 non-ICU Inpatient staff			
A- 1e	Other staff providing face-to-face care and services for COVID-19 patients			
A- 1f	Staff in other congregate living settings	Veterans residing in other <u>long term/congregate settings</u> without access to COVID-19 vaccine.		
A- 2a	Core staff critical to function of the hospital and the COVID-19 response (e.g., logistics, facilities operations, police, food services, occupational health, infection control, environmental engineering, limited executive or leadership roles) *	<div><p>ACIP (CDC) Phases</p><p>1a = Blue (HCP, LTCF)</p><p>1b = Green (Essential Workers, 75 and older)</p><p>1c = Brown (65-74; high-risk conditions)</p></div>		
A- 2b	Inpatient staff, non-COVID-19 units			
A- 2c	Staff performing high risk procedures (non-COVID-19, pre-screened)			
A- 3a	Hemodialysis staff			
A- 3b	Oncology/chemotherapy unit staff			
A- 4a	Homeless Outreach staff			
A- 4b	Staff with frequent contact with Veterans who have not been pre-screened for COVID-19 symptoms (screeners, drivers, etc.)			
A- 4c	Outpatient direct care/contact (pre-screened, non-COVID-19)			
A- 4d	Other health care personnel and staff			
B- 1a		Veterans age 75+	Homeless Veterans, Hemodialysis patients, Solid Organ Transplant patients or patients who are listed for transplant, and Chemotherapy patients (receiving chemotherapy in a clinic/hospital setting)	Frontline Essential Workers as defined by CDC
C- 1a		Veterans age 65-74		Other Essential Workers, as defined by CDC
C- 1b	Other VA services, non-health care	Veterans younger than 65 with high-risk conditions as defined by CDC		
C- 1c		Veterans younger than 65		

Vaccine Distribution

➤ Vaccine is currently **not available** from VA Connecticut for:

- Veterans not enrolled for care with VA
 - Enroll at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>
- Non-Veteran family members or caregivers

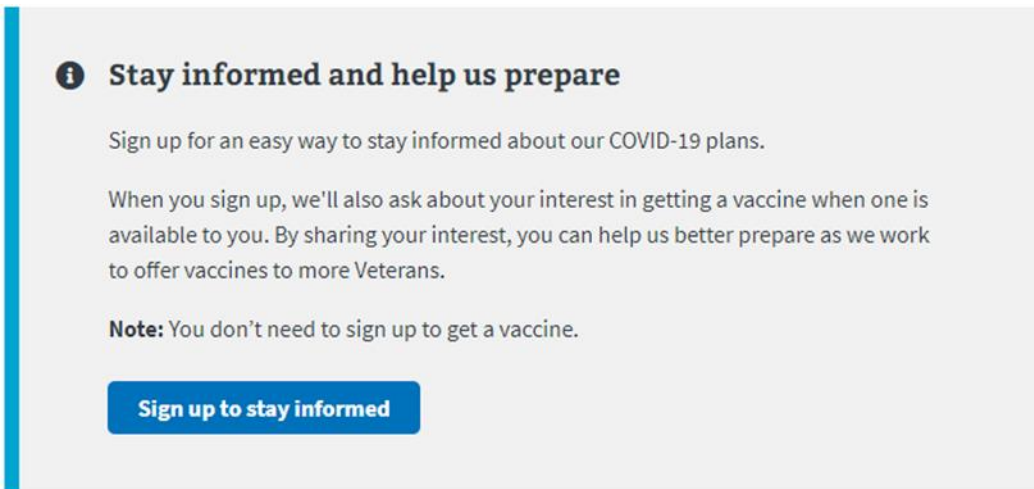
➤ State of Connecticut COVID-19 Response

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/covid-19%20vaccinations>

- Eligibility, access, and support to help Connecticut residents get vaccinated against COVID-19
- Connecticut is currently in **Phase 1b** of our statewide rollout plan.
 - Individuals 75 and older

Where To Obtain Additional Information

- Visit VA's COVID-19 Vaccine website at:
 - www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine
- Sign up to receive updated information on COVID-19 vaccinations at VA through the Keep Me Informed tool at:
 - www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed



Where To Obtain Additional Information

- Visit the Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 Vaccination website at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/



Questions

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